

EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMUNITY

Understanding Employee Volunteering

The Volunteer Centre UK in association with
Business in the Community

Sponsored by



"Whitbread, as a member of the Employees in the Community Leadership Team and sponsors of this publication, wholly endorse and support the messages of this initiative and hope that 'Understanding Employee Volunteering' will help companies appreciate the benefits that employee volunteering programmes can have for the company, the individual and the community. Our Community Investment Programme creates the environment for opportunity, but we believe it is the energy of our staff that makes the Programme a success, and our employee volunteering programme has proved an ideal way of enabling our employees to participate"

Sam Whitbread

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1. Introduction

The greatest resources of any business consist of the skills, knowledge and energies of the people working for it. Companies with most experience of community investment have long known what Policy Studies Institute research has recently shown that:

“specialist advice and skill transfer... is frequently more significant... than direct financial support”.

So it makes sense for employers to look for ways to share these resources with the charities and community organisations they wish to support. Employee volunteering programmes provide a way for employers to do this. They encourage employees to become involved as volunteers in their local communities and support those that do.

They benefit the community by providing new talent and energy, increasing the pool of available skills (especially managerial and technical skills), bringing a fresh perspective and increasing public awareness of community problems.

How does this differ from secondment?

Employee volunteering programmes involve many employees contributing to the community relatively small amounts of their own time. Secondment is a work commitment and involves a smaller number of employees, at management level, contributing longer periods of company time. They are complementary ways of involving employees in the community.

Why an organised programme?

A lot of employee community activity is already happening. According to a survey conducted by the Volunteer Centre UK in 1991, 51% of adults volunteer and most of these do so regularly.

By introducing an employee volunteering programme, you can:

- Achieve greater awareness amongst your employees
- Ensure more activity carried out on a more regular basis
- Evaluate activities and so make them more effective and focused
- Ensure higher visibility in the community

2. The Benefits of employee volunteering

Employee volunteering programmes bring other benefits as well. They will:

- **Raise employee morale.** Employee volunteering helps bridge the gap between what the company does for the community ("half a dozen people at HQ writing cheques" according to one employee) and what employees do. The feeling that everyone in the company is working together for the good of their community increases employees' loyalty to the company.
- **Provide opportunities for staff to develop and practise business skills,** particularly in leadership, teamwork, decision making and customer relations. For example, retailers find that the experience of helping disadvantaged people improves the sensitivity and patience of staff to customers.
- **Help attract and retain better employees.** Employee volunteering enables employees to share in the company's community affairs programme and the good feelings engendered by it. Companies with substantial community programmes have found that their good deeds are hardly visible to their staff. Personal involvement means that employees know about, appreciate and feel proud of what the company contributes to the community.
- **Improve community relations.** Employees make excellent ambassadors for the company. Ordinary people giving up their free time to help are trusted in a way that "big business" may not be. ("They are only after the publicity.")
- **Improve your public image.** People doing things make much better copy than someone handing over a cheque.
- **Increase the impact of community**
When employees are involved in the groups you support financially, the company will know if the money is being properly used and if new needs are emerging. And employee volunteers who promote payroll giving to their colleagues can increase the take-up rate dramatically.
- **Improve communication and understanding** – between departments, sites, and across the managerial hierarchy.

- **Add to the staff benefit package.** The power to be able to make a difference to issues they care about is a substantial 'perk'.
- **Provide a bridge to retirement for employees.**

Often these benefits are incidental – pleasant spin offs – but not the reason for the exercise. Because employee volunteering programmes are extremely flexible, it is possible to design them as tools to deliberately bring about a desired outcome. Examples include:

Major changes in **Whitbread's** information systems group meant 100 people coming together under a new senior manager. At his request, the employee volunteering co-ordinator organised a day-long project which set out to achieve the following objectives:

- To give people a sense of belonging to the new group
- To start building a team
- To begin a common approach to quality
- To do something of value to the community.

In **ICI's** Grangemouth plant, employees were disheartened at being typecast by others as people who did not care about the environment simply because of their place of work. Management responded to these concerns by developing, with the help of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, a project which involved employees and local people working together as volunteers to protect wildlife.

The management development team of **Halifax Building Society** wanted to provide a way for employees to develop creativity, confidence, the ability to plan and organise, and communication and presentation skills – and, at the same time, to benefit their local communities. They devised a programme 'Community Development Circles', through which 350 staff created and carried out community projects, largely in their own time as volunteers. The programme met all the developmental targets set for it.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"Enthusiasm for employee volunteering has greatly exceeded our expectations. In addition to helping the communities in which we trade, there have been so many benefits to the Company and to our employees – motivation, personal development, team building, improved inter-department and cross-site communication – and all taking place in a context of fun and enjoyment."

Sam Whitbread, Whitbread PLC

"Our employee involvement activities are as important, if not more important, when times are hard for business than in good times. In business at the moment, staff are often banging their heads against brick walls. When they go out into the community they can achieve something and feel appreciated and valued. It gives them a respite and they come back refreshed. We definitely see an increased motivation at work."

Robert Beattie, IBM UK, Edinburgh

"We learned so much about ourselves... It makes you glad to be alive... To see somebody benefit gave us such a lot."

Hilary Stubbs, Senior Secretary, Allied Dunbar

"Steve has been working for the company for 20 years. He's been coming home bored and boring. Since he's been involved in the scheme, I don't recognise him. The kids have got a new father. They couldn't believe it. It's great."

Laurie Ansell, wife of Steve Ansell, fork-lift-truck driver and Chair of Bizzie Links employee volunteering committee, Whitbread Hedge End

"There is no problem developing employees' enthusiasm. On the contrary, if there is a problem, it is containing their enthusiasm. Some people had started planning their next project before the end of this year's cycle."

Fraser Krischke, Assistant Development Officer, Halifax Building Society

"The input of (The Body Shop volunteers) gave us all a boost and made such a difference to the people involved and to the staff's morale."

Valerie Sharp of West Sussex Social Services

3. The types of employee volunteering programme

Most employee volunteering programmes fall into one of the following categories.

A company may:

- support and recognise volunteers
- match employee volunteers with community needs
- develop company projects

SUPPORTING AND RECOGNISING VOLUNTEERS

Support and recognition fosters a climate in the company which values voluntary activity. This makes it easier to introduce the other types of programme and reinforces their effectiveness. Ways of demonstrating support include:

Provision of Help In-kind

Allowing access to facilities such as meeting rooms; services such as design and printing; training and redundant equipment or furniture to employees to help with them with their voluntary work. Encouraging employees to use the company magazine and other communication channels to publicise events or make appeals on behalf of the organisations they support. Guidelines governing the type of organisation, the maximum number of donations and the priority to be given to donated services are explained in advance.

Paid time-off for voluntary work

Allowing time off to specific types of volunteers such as magistrates and school governors; allowing staff charity and volunteer committees to meet in work time; allowing regular amounts of time off to all staff subject to the approval of line managers and the demands of work; organising occasional or regular community projects which take place in work time. A release time policy for all staff is rare. Companies who have such a policy say it does not lead to lower productivity.

Recognition by senior managers and colleagues. Possibilities include:

- a column in the house magazine profiling volunteers and their achievements
- visits by senior staff to branches which have carried out significant voluntary projects
- a lunch or reception hosted by a senior manager, to which selected volunteers can invite a representative of the voluntary group they support
- personal Thank You letters to key volunteers on completion of major tasks, sent by senior managers.

Individual volunteers should be asked whether or not they welcome this kind of publicity, and be given the option to remain anonymous.

Matched doing

The employer gives cash support to organisations in which their staff are volunteering. The type of organisation and the maximum donation available are explained in advance.

Matched fundraising

The employer makes donations to match funds raised by individuals or groups of employees. The sorts of organisations eligible and any upper limit on support can be specified in advance.

Community Action Awards

Establishing a competition in which awards are given to one or several employees who have been nominated as outstanding volunteers. The awards consist of grants to the organisations the employees assist plus a small gift to the employees. This is a popular way of finding out what voluntary activity is already taking place before establishing a formal programme.

MATCHING EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS

Links with a variety of community organisations

Information and volunteer opportunities are obtained from local community organisations and promoted to staff via newsletters, bulletins, noticeboards, etc. Community groups can also be invited to give presentations to staff at lunchtime sessions or pre-retirement briefings. Potential volunteers then contact a company co-ordinator, the agency itself or an intermediary organisation such as a Volunteer Bureau.

Skills Banks

A co-ordinator recruits willing employees, inventories their skills, solicits requests from community groups and then matches volunteers with needs. There are three kinds of Skills Banks:

- **Professional and Technical Assistance**
Individuals with particular skills are matched with requests for skilled assistance.
- **Management Committees**
All voluntary agencies and charities are run by a management committee composed of volunteers. Employees wishing to serve on management committees are matched with requests. Training may be arranged.
- **General Skills Banks**
Skills can be hobby or trade-related (for example, rewiring, guitar playing, gardening) as well as professional and technical.

Single Agency Link

Some companies focus a significant amount of sponsorship support on a single agency. They may then substantially increase the return on their investment for the company and for the agency by involving staff as planners, advisers or general volunteers. Often, a senior management representative sits on the advisory committee of the agency. This person then recruits volunteers by asking people if they want to get involved or by using company newsletters to appeal for volunteers.

DEVELOPING COMPANY PROJECTS

One off and short term projects

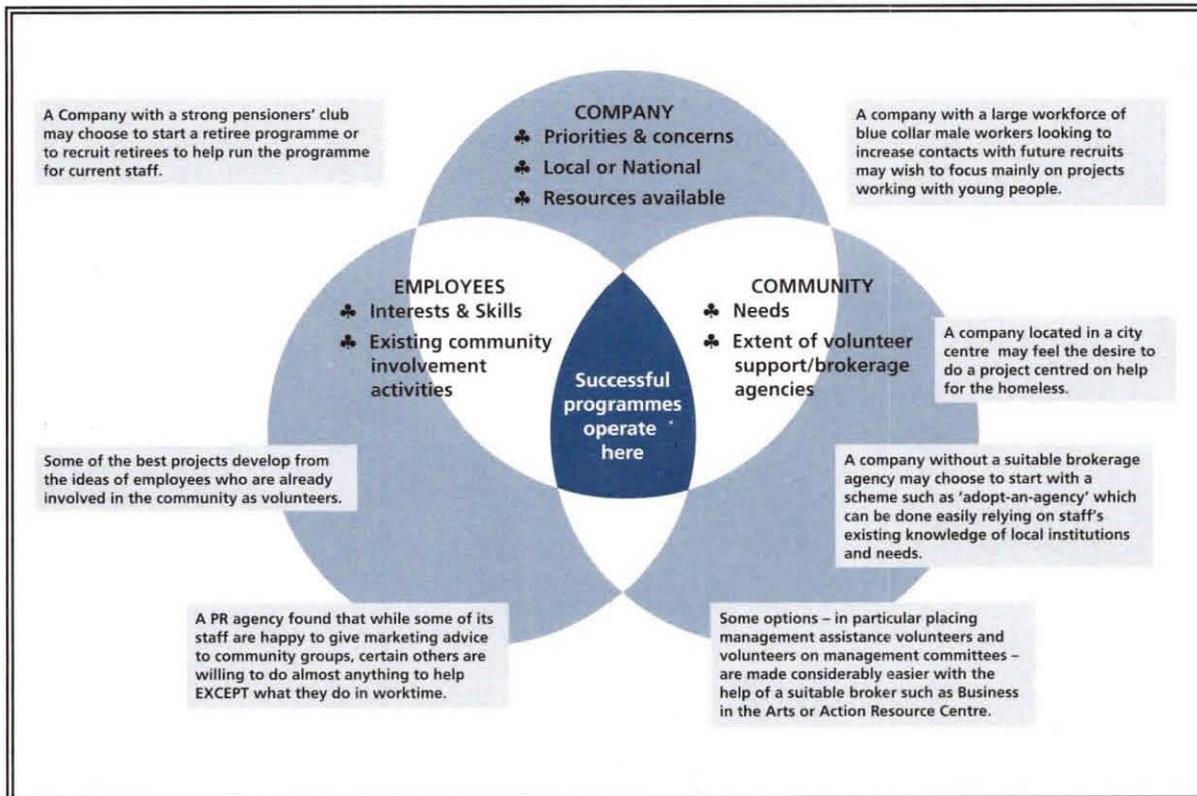
This involves a group of employees working on specific goals or events. The project may be a fundraising event or include direct involvement with the local community, for example decorating a home for disabled people or building a nature trail.

On-going projects

The company establishes a link with a community group and provides help in a number of ways. This link can either be at a local level, eg. working with a special needs school, or it can be a national link and be used to focus both employee volunteer time and company financial contributions.

4. Choosing the programme that is right for your company

Elements from each of the types of programme can be combined on a 'mix and match' basis to create a programme which suits the needs and culture of almost any company. The main factors to consider in deciding what type of programme is right for you are summarised in the diagram below.



This diagram is reprinted with permission from the magazine Working Out published by the Action Resource Centre, Business in the Community and The Volunteer Centre UK.

5. Ways to develop employee volunteering

No company starts from scratch. Most employee volunteering programmes develop organically, building on and extending activities which already exist. Even if your company is only beginning its community investment programme you can be sure that many of your employees are already involved in the community as volunteers.

To develop a programme in this way you need to find out what is already happening and then look for ways to:

- Increase the number of employees participating. Consider encouraging spouses, families and retirees to participate
- Establish a structure which will enable activities to be organised regularly

- Increase the variety of activities. Consider ways of going beyond fundraising to involve employees as planners, advisers and hands-on volunteers
- Allow community organisations to contribute their ideas to the programme
- Use community involvement to meet objectives of other departments eg. training, customer service, personnel, employee relations

Combining different types of activities together often leads to more effective programme development as the different activities support and reinforce each other.

The chart below shows how Employee Volunteering Programmes can be developed.

	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
AUDIT EXISTING ACTIVITY	<i>Add questions to attitude survey; distribute a short survey to solicit employees' ideas, which do not ask for their names; establish an award scheme to gain information</i>	<i>Conduct a survey for purposes of evaluating the programme and soliciting ideas; include optional section for names of employees willing to be contacted about particular projects</i>	<i>Distribute a survey asking for skills and interests for matching purposes; ask for names and departments of employees</i>
SUPPORT AND RECOGNISE VOLUNTEERS; FOSTER CLIMATE WHICH VALUES VOLUNTEERING	<i>Profile employee volunteer activity in company magazine; match individual giving, doing; give community action awards; route in-kind donations through individual volunteers</i>	<i>Use matching programme to support employee committees and to encourage involvement beyond fund raising; issue certificates to volunteers participating in company projects</i>	<i>Organise recognition/celebration events for employees who volunteer; host a celebration event for volunteers from the local community during UK Volunteers Week; consider recognising substantial voluntary involvement through the appraisal system; release time policy</i>
COMMUNICATE/ MATCH VOLUNTEERS WITH NEEDS	<i>Column in company magazine profiling employees who volunteer; appealing for volunteers to join company projects; featuring appeals from employees on behalf of agencies they support</i>	<i>Insert in magazine or separate newsletter containing volunteer opportunities obtained from community organisations; extend publicity</i>	<i>Formal matching programme with co-ordinator to manage skills bank; set up network of departmental representatives to publicise needs and recruit volunteers</i>
ORGANISE PROJECTS	<i>Support projects spontaneously organised by employees; invite employees to be involved in projects funded by the company; 'adopt' a charity as a focus for company donations and employee fundraising</i>	<i>Choose for financial support projects and charities which allow participation of employees as planners, advisors and general volunteers as well as fundraisers; encourage the formation of on-going employee committees to choose projects and recruit volunteers; produce and communicate guidelines for company support to employee initiated projects; encourage employees to visit groups before donating funds so as to identify opportunities for 'hands-on' involvement</i>	<i>Develop programme to 'twin' departments or branches with community organisations for a defined period; provide back-up to employee committees - networking, training, handbook of ideas; encourage the involvement of a community representative as consultant to employee committees; devolve responsibility for part of the corporate affairs budget to employees through line management and departmental or branch committees</i>

STEP BY STEP: HOW TO DEVELOP AN EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

The Systematic Approach

To move systematically and quickly to a Stage Three Programme, you should take the following steps:

- 1. Develop a company policy on volunteering and community involvement.**
Creating a policy does not – and must not – mean that staff are required to participate. It simply states what the company stands for and outlines the kinds of activities it encourages its employees to undertake. Employees can and should be involved in helping formulate the policy.
- 2. Determine a budget for the programme.**
- 3. Select a community involvement co-ordinator.**
- 4. Consult employees and select an initial project for special attention from the company.**
- 5. Recognise and reward volunteering.**
- 6. Evaluate the programme; make adjustments.**
- 7. Replicate the programme in other branches (in a national company).**

This approach has been carried through effectively in several British companies. To be successful you need strong commitment from the top; visible company support for employees' efforts; and a co-ordinator with excellent communications skills.

The Organic Approach

To develop employee volunteering in a more gradual way, you may take the following steps:

- 1. Support and recognise employees who volunteer.**
- 2. Support staff fundraising.**
- 3. Give support to employee initiated projects which go beyond fundraising and involve employees in projects supported by company donations.**
- 4. Make co-ordinating employee volunteering part of the job description of an existing member of staff.**
- 5. Create a structure eg. branch community affairs committees involving employees.**
- 6. Set as one objective for these committee involving employees in ways beyond fundraising.**
- 7. Substantially increase staff co-ordinator's time and establish a separate budget for employee volunteering.**
- 8. Write a vision statement and a company policy on employee involvement.**
- 9. Launch/celebrate the programme and achievements to date.**
- 10. Look for ways to deliberately integrate employee community involvement into other mainstream company functions**

The organic approach has also been followed successfully by UK companies. But as no two companies are the same. It is not possible to say quite how and in what order such steps should be taken. But the 'success factors' you need to build into your programme are now well understood.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMMES

Top management support
Line management understanding and support
Recognition of volunteers
A central co-ordinator of activities
Visible, practical company support for employees' activities
Publicity to keep employees and the community informed
Resources to meet necessary administration costs (see below)
Employees 'own' the activities; they are freely undertaken and initiated wholly by themselves or co-operatively with management
Effective partnership with organisations in the front line tackling community problems
Modest beginnings – for example by –
piloting in one or two locations;
or by holding the PR launch later rather than earlier
Communications to employees based upon the underlying messages of
"We support you in what you want to do"
"We want to share with you what we are doing"
"We want to create a community programme together"
(for companies with no previous community programme)

N.B. Avoid any communications that employees might interpret as: *"Employee volunteering (in the abstract) is a good thing. We think you ought to be involved in the community. When you are involved it will be as a company representative."*

Multi-Site Companies

Companies wanting to establish a programme in all their branches can choose from the following approaches to ensure that activity is organised and executed locally:

- Provide modest local community affairs budgets to finance volunteering projects, pay the administration costs of local volunteer committees and make donations to community groups in which employees volunteer
- Pilot the programme at selected locations and then, once proven successful, replicate it across the country through line management or volunteer committees.
- Include in the job description of a local staff member the task of encouraging employee volunteering. Provide central support to this through training, networking and a handbook of ideas
- Establish branch community affairs award scheme with staff volunteer activity as one criteria for winning the award
- Form a partnership with a national voluntary organisation whose network matches your own

6. What will it cost?

Employee volunteering is exceptionally cost effective. It can maintain and extend company community involvement even when times are hard. But it is not free. It entails the donation of both time and money.

How much time will be required to establish and maintain a programme?

For most types of programme, staff time is the most significant cost. It is clear from experience both in the UK and the US that this type of programme does not take off without central management support – someone who, within their job description, is responsible for ‘making it happen’. Whether this is a full-time or one or more part-time jobs depends upon circumstances and the resources available.

‘Matched doing’ and ‘matched fundraising’ programmes can be administered centrally and incorporated into the community affairs or personnel functions. The other types of programme also need some central co-ordination, but are far more likely to succeed if employees themselves are involved in running them. For this reason, in most companies the central staff member is supported by employee committees or by volunteer co-ordinators who are responsible for organising events in each branch or department.

Employee volunteering programmes take less time to maintain than to establish. Once established, the role of the central co-ordinator becomes less demanding and consists largely of providing support, networking and new ideas to the committees. So some companies provide a full time co-ordinator for the first year; thereafter the role is part time. Other variations include the use of a consultant to help in the set-up period; and the combination of a part-time central manager with overall responsibility for the programme, with a network of branch employee committees, each supported by a retiree.

However much staff time you are able to devote to the programme it is essential to take seriously recruiting the right person for the job. Programme co-ordination should not be given to a staff member simply because they happen to be the least stretched at the time.

Intermediary bodies such as Volunteer Bureaux, Councils for Voluntary Service and Action Resource Centre offices, may also help in running the programme in the following ways:

- developing volunteer opportunity columns for in-house magazines or bulletins for noticeboards
- developing group projects for employees
- providing support to employee volunteering committees
- working with community organisations to identify and develop clear project descriptions particularly for management assistance opportunities
- conducting orientation seminars for prospective volunteers

Most community organisations are functioning on a shoe-string and will have little spare staff time. They may be able to act as consultants on an unpaid basis. However, if you are planning to rely on them for regular services in order to run your programme you will need to budget for hiring extra staff time from them.

What financial commitment will be needed?

Money will be needed for items such as

- the production of a one or two page insert in the staff magazine
- internal promotional literature
- incidental expenses eg cameras to ensure that any project undertaken by volunteers is recorded for internal and external publicity purposes
- development costs for special company projects
- support costs for employee committees eg. to print their own notepaper; to produce T-shirts; to create their own identity; to develop a handbook of ideas
- a matched fundraising or matched doing budget. (This need not represent ‘new money’, but may be transferred from existing budgets from, say, the chairman’s charity budget.)

Some Examples of Costs

Whitbread gives each of its employee volunteer committees £1,000 each year to support local charities. In addition, £500 is spent on items such as T-shirts, notice boards and stationery for each committee. The committees also meet in work time, though this does not generally interfere with their work. These costs do not include the salary of the Volunteer Programme Manager.

Allied Dunbar Assurance run two programmes matching volunteers with needs. One is for general volunteers; the other for professional helpers. In addition, they organise company projects. The budget for all of these activities, exclusive of staff time, is around £15,000 per year. The budget for the newly introduced Volunteer Award Scheme is £5,000.

Sainsbury's Community Service Award Scheme consisted of 10 awards of £250 in its first year of operation. In 1991 30 awards of £500 were made.

Shell UK's Community Service Fund (matched doing) had an initial budget of £40,000 with a grant ceiling of £250. The budget in 1990 had been increased to £140,000.

(In the above two cases the budgets do not include publicity or staff time.)

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, as a public institution, are unable to back staff activities with hard cash but allow employees access to reprographic facilities when those resources are spare. Employees provide their own paper and publicity is provided through the staff magazine.

7. Sources of help and information

Extensive help is available to companies who decide to establish an employee volunteering programme or to extend an existing one.

PEOPLE

The following people are willing to give advice and share experience:

Whitbread PLC – Christine de Cruz,
Manager, Whitbread Volunteer programme.
Tel: 071 606 4455

Allied Dunbar Assurance plc – Jerry Marston,
Community Affairs Manager.
Tel: 0793 514514

IBM UK – Sandra Sanglin,
Public Affairs.
Tel: 071 928 1777

Royal Mail – Giles Holman,
Head of Community Action.
Tel: 071 250 2528

Business in the Community – June Cadogan
or Diane Worley, Campaign Assistants,
Employees in the Community.
Tel: 071 629 1600

The Volunteer Centre UK – Clare Smith,
Development Officer, Employee Volunteering.
Tel: 0442 873311.

Action Resource Centre – David Hemsworth
Tel: 071 383 2200.

Cynon Valley Employee Volunteering Initiative – Allison Williams, Co-ordinator.
Tel: 0685 882 515

Volunteering Development Scotland
Employee Volunteering Working Group –
Marjorie O'Donnell, Development Officer.
Tel: 0786 479593

Action Resource Centre, Leicester –
Simon Hodgkin, 'Hands On Leicester'
Co-ordinator.
Tel: 0533 543398

Action Resource Centre, Leeds –
Simon Robinson,
Employee Volunteering Co-ordinator.
Tel: 0532 347790

PUBLICATIONS

Employees in the Community: a Handbook for Action

Indispensable handbook for staff members given responsibility for establishing and running an employee involvement programme. Gives details on all types of programme from fundraising through hands-on volunteering to secondment. Includes comprehensive how-to information on all aspects of running a programme from set-up to evaluation, plus sample company materials. Updating service available. Available from Business in the Community and The Volunteer Centre UK.

Volunteering For Success

A booklet giving examples of outstanding Employee Volunteering programmes, including the winners of the UK Award for Employee Volunteering. Available from Business in the Community.

Lessons from America

An introduction to the history of corporate volunteerism in the USA and the practical lessons that can be learnt by UK companies. Available from Business in the Community.

Making the Most of Employee Community Involvement.

A handbook written for non-profit organisations. Useful to give to community organisations with whom you work on a regular basis. Available from The Volunteer Centre UK.

The above publications are available from:

Business in the Community
Tel: 071 629 1600

and

The Volunteer Centre UK
Tel: 0442 873311



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Whitbread plc

Whitbread were among the original companies in the UK who recognised the benefits for both the company and the voluntary sector of employee volunteering programmes. Involved since 1989, they took forward a recommendation from research that employee volunteering was one area of work to be developed further. As a result, Sam Whitbread became the Chair of the BITC Leadership Team for the first two years of Employees in the Community campaign and Whitbread sponsored the first 3 years of the UK Award for Employee Volunteering.

Their commitment to employee volunteering is shown through the objectives that have been set by the Whitbread Community Investment programme:

- To demonstrate leadership in the field of employee volunteering through membership of the BITC Leadership Team and by sharing best practice with other companies
- To support the development of local employee volunteering committees through the appointment of an Employee Volunteering Programme Manager
- To support the local employee volunteering activities through the provision of resources, both in cash and in kind

Whitbread is a leading UK drinks, food and leisure company, which owns and operates some of the country's most popular shops, restaurants and hotels as well as brewing famous brands of beer. The challenge for the company therefore, was to establish a programme which allowed for involvement across a wide number of sites, many different types of individual, across a wide geographical area.

Having launched the Employee Volunteering Initiative and conducted some research amongst employees to establish attitudes towards this area, Whitbread visited the USA to confirm that employee volunteering was a key component in successful community affairs activity. The newly appointed Employee Volunteering Programme Manager started the process of setting up the programme by visiting Whitbread sites to discuss the possibility of setting up committees to co-ordinate employee voluntary activity. Starting with two sites in Gloucester and Southampton, volunteering committees were established, with Head Office offering support through giving advice,

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start up funding and a camera - to ensure that all their volunteering landmarks were captured on film.

After six months of operation, each committee was given a charity cheque book to the value of £1,000 which they can use to support charities of their choice.

There are now 25 staff committees, each with its own elected Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, etc. The committees are made up of staff from many different departments and levels. Although senior management endorse and support the employees' volunteering, they are generally not represented on the committee. Each committee is encouraged to choose its own activities and to promote internally through dedicated notice boards and a locally-designed newsletter. Recognition for outstanding commitment is given through a special lapel pin and sometimes committee branded T-shirts. Whitbread's Chairman hosts an annual recognition luncheon for committee members.

Networking between committees is encouraged and regional inter-committee meetings are increasing. A recent innovation has been the introduction by the company of training courses for volunteers thereby giving participants a further networking opportunity. Apart from fundraising activities, community volunteering has included hospital visits, school link projects, provision of meals for the elderly, visits and donations to victims of mugging, environmental projects, painting hospital wards, gardening, hosting a disabled sports day, charity board representations and advice, and care for the terminally ill.

Money has been raised for many local causes with groups ranging from hospitals, playgroups, schools and scout groups benefitting. However, the site committees, with names such as Bizzielinks, Helping Hands and Reach Out also tie in their activities with the overall activities of the Whitbread Community Investment Programme. Links with education for example, are assisted by arranging site visits, providing work experience and shadowing, mock interviews, encouraging school governors and staff involvement with curriculum development.

The committees are also encouraging retiree involvement which will further increasing their overall strength. The Company's community involvement programme is viewed as an investment in the long term success of the business and employee volunteering is regarded as a key component in the success of the Whitbread Community Investment Programme.

Allied Dunbar

Allied Dunbar's Employee Volunteering programme is centred around the activity of their Staff Charity Fund, founded in 1975, and part of an overall Community Involvement programme which sees caring as a fundamental part of the corporate culture. The Fund itself raises over £75,000 annually from staff, primarily through tax effective payroll deduction and is managed entirely by staff who sit on grants committees, visit and assess all applications and make decisions on the policy and direction of the Fund. From 1993 onwards, the company has transferred responsibility for all its local community involvement to the Staff Fund creating a unified overall grants budget of £350,000.

Employee involvement is supported in the company by 4 full time staff members and guidelines are given to staff relating to involvement in voluntary activity. Members of Staff Charity Fund Committees are allowed up to 2 hours of work time a week to fulfil their roles - a clear commitment by the Company to the importance of this activity. Time off for others involved in employee volunteering schemes is viewed flexibly, and generally works out at 2/3 own time and 1/3 company time.

The overall objectives of the employee involvement programme are:

- to encourage staff at all levels to give their time and money to community and charitable causes
- to provide opportunities for personal development, acquiring skills and experience through community activities

In 1993, these objectives will be achieved through raising and spending £350,000 of charitable funds and involving 900 (40%) of the workforce in volunteering activities through the various schemes that are operated.

The two elements which form the basis of the Employee Involvement programme are Volunteers at Work and ALPHA (Allied Professional Help and Advice) which encourage employees to volunteer their time and skills to help charities and voluntary organisations, most of which are near to the company's headquarters in Swindon.

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The Volunteers at Work programme presents employees with a variety of opportunities for short and long term community involvement. The programme is supported by a quarterly bulletin to staff - MADCAP (Magazine of the Allied Dunbar Community Action Programme) which features volunteer opportunities and in its three year life has recruited over 800 volunteers.

Successful volunteer activities include The Wiltshire Childrens' Holiday Scheme which provides week long camping holidays for disadvantaged children - Allied Dunbar match paid leave with unpaid leave and the Dunbar Conservation Group - a team of 35 volunteers who have adopted a stretch of disused railway line in central Swindon and meets regularly to clear undergrowth, plant trees and create a wildlife pond.

The ALPHA scheme enlists the technical and professional skills of staff in response to specific requests from charities. Currently active in finance, management services, personnel, premises and marketing, over 40 assignments are taken on each year where volunteers undertake one off projects using their own professional skills such as providing advice on computer systems, premises, financial planning and preparation of accounts, staff management, recruitment and training; design and printing of literature; help with publicity and marketing.

Allied Dunbar also pioneered the idea of Company Community Challenges, now an annual event, where staff are challenged by local community organisations to complete various community projects within a specific period. The annual event 'Challenge 92 - We Said Yes!' took place in July 1992 when over 800 staff took on 100 challenges, donating 7,000 hours of voluntary work in the process. This model has now been developed into a national initiative, The National Challenge, which will run for the second time in June 1994.

The Allied Dunbar programme has won both the 1989 Dragon Award for Community Involvement and the 1990 and 1992 UK Award for Employee Volunteering. The company has also introduced its own annual Volunteer Awards recognising team and individual achievement in both fundraising and volunteering.

Arnold & Nathan

Arnold & Nathan are a firm of civil engineering and building contractors, employing **85** people in West Kent. They were first introduced to Young Enterprise as advisers in 1990 when a group of three were responsible for organising and running a YE company at Tonbridge School involving 27 youngsters drawn from 4 schools in Tonbridge. More recently, they were asked to head up the reorganisation of the West Kent Area of Young Enterprise and when Peter Rogerson became the Chairman of the West Ken YE, the company gave him the time to reconstitute the West Kent Area Board and develop the programme to involve 170 youngsters in 11 companies.

Young Enterprise aims to provide young people aged 15-19 with an exciting and imaginative practical business experience, enabling them to develop their personal skills, knowledge and understanding of business objectives and the wealth creation process. It involves students from all types of schools and with different levels of ability. Whether from comprehensive schools, independent schools, inner city schools, rural schools, colleges of further education or special needs groups; all take part and achieve.

Arnold & Nathan have continued its involvement beyond the area management as advisers in Tonbridge and Tonbridge Wells and is also involved in encouraging other companies to take part. During 1992, the company hopes to increase support and to broaden the base of operation through involvement with the County Board of YE as well as continuing involvement in West Kent

Against a background budget of £10 and a difficult economic climate, volunteer advisers and masses of enthusiasm, the company has been pleased with the success of raising awareness for the programme and fundraising and sponsorship that has taken place.

For more information on Young Enterprise or details of how to get involve, please contact Young Enterprise National Office, Ewert Place, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7BZ

Essex Fire and Rescue Service

Essex Fire and Rescue Service employs around 1,300 staff in the Essex area and its voluntary activity centres around the Ocean Youth Club which offers adventure at sea for all young people, especially those disadvantaged by discrimination, social or financial circumstances.

The ECFRS has actively supported the Ocean Youth Club for many years and the Chief Fire Officer is also Area Governor of the Eastern Area of Ocean Youth Club. He regularly skips one of their vessels, taking enthusiastic crews from all social backgrounds to various destinations along the coast of Europe.

Both uniformed and non-uniformed staff support the Ocean Youth Club through various means including the creating and supporting of an Essex Support Group which assists the local Ocean Youth Club vessel by fundraising, provision of assistance/labour for refits and repairs, publicity campaigns, and by providing relief personnel in emergencies. The fire service also provides training on practical firefighting and engine maintenance.

Several ECFRS staff hold sea-going qualifications and these include one skipper, three first mates, two second mates and several others who provide technical and administrative back-up. In addition, over 150 staff have benefited from a one week management development course with Ocean Youth Club. This obviously assists the OYC to grow the number of people on the programme and helps to instill a newfound awareness of the thrill and adventure of sailing, which in turn helps to promote courses and generates finance.

The Fire Service has also recently undertaken fund raising activities and a recent mailshot generated £1,500 which was donated by local businesses and which will be used directly for future OYC activities. A further £2,500 was raised in Telethon by staff. To further the work of the OYC, the Fire Service plans to continue support for the Club by promoting courses and participation to other County Council departments including Education and Social Services. The Service also plans to initiate further schemes to ensure active employee involvement and that this unique and worthwhile experience remains accessible to the people of the region.

GKN Sankey

GKN Sankey is a building company employing some 2,000 people and the focus of their employee volunteering programme is around the Employees Charity Trust which was established in 1989 with the aim of giving financial aid to the local community in any area where the company's employees work or live. The trust is managed by the employees, with the full support of the company.

In 1989, CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) made presentations to staff and management representatives and a high profile campaign was launched to promote Give as You Earn. The campaign was supported by the company and the Trade Unions and was spearheaded by employee volunteers who canvassed all areas of the workforce, aided by a poster campaign, a letter to employees and an audio-visual presentation. The initial campaign culminated in the company's first Families Open Day at which £5,000 was raised from a raffle to give the Charity Trust a good start. Since 1989 the numbers of employees contributing to the scheme increases annually and about 50% of the workforce now contribute.

The Trust's funds are managed by about 20 employee trustees drawn from all areas and levels of the company. They act as liaison with the workforce and meet monthly to discuss proposals for donations and to monitor the progress of the Charity Trust's work. Proposals for organisations which could benefit from a donation from the Trust are made by individual employees or groups with a written supported case. Unsolicited requests are also considered and often employees will present their case personally to the Trustees or representatives from the group will visit the proposed recipients.

In this way, every employee acts as a representative of the Trust with the role of considering which causes should be considered and of recommending the scale of donation. In some cases, the company will add financial support to the Trust's donation.

Donations range from £50 to £10,000 and there are clear guidelines for support. The criteria for Trust support are that the recipient should be local to the workplace or an employee's residence, and that there is a need which, in the opinion of the employees, would be met by a donation from the Trust.

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Progress of the Trust is regularly communicated internally and much publicity is gained in the local media. Much publicity is obtained in the local press which is of benefit, not only to some of the donation recipients, promoting public interest, but also stimulating further employee involvement from constant exposure of the Trust's work. Over £124,000 has been given since the start of the Trust and about £4,000 a month is now given by nearly 1000 employees.

Grand Metropolitan

In June 1992, to reinforce Grand Metropolitan's commitment to supporting their staff's volunteering efforts, the company appointed an Employee Volunteering Manager to develop programmes throughout GrandMet's UK operating companies. Building on existing activity, and learning from experience in the USA, the aims of the programme are to promote and facilitate employee volunteering and to develop and coordinate new volunteering initiatives.

Employee volunteers have access to a wide range of company support:

- advice on how to make practical links with community organisations
- funding from the Charitable Trust to support volunteer efforts
- use of 'in kind' resources, such as meeting rooms, photocopying machines

Examples of activity within GrandMet companies include:

Burger King

- strong links with education, e.g. working with Chase Bridge School in Richmond, Surrey where Burger King have provided a school governor, a team has painted a classroom with paint donated by a local DIY store
- as part of The National Challenge, 160 employees from Burger King restaurants in teams of 4 emptied collection boxes for the RNIB. £3,000 was collected in one afternoon and presented to Northwood School for children who are disabled and visually impaired
- 6 employees from Burger King's UK Headquarters are linking with students from West London Institute of Higher Education who are undertaking community projects as part of their degree courses. Employees act as a source of professional support, both to the students and community organisation, offering advice on areas such as marketing and finance. The programme will hopefully demonstrate how business, education and the voluntary sector can work together effectively and learn from each other.

Chef & Brewer

- The employees, through the national pub network, are active fundraisers for national and local charities. In 1992, employees from pubs collectively raised over £250,000 for the Telethon appeal. This was achieved by the creativity of staff to encourage and motivate customers to donate money and participate in events

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- In Northampton, unwanted computers from Head Office have been installed in a range of local organisations and a Chef & Brewer IT specialist acts as a link between the company and the community groups to install equipment and offer training and advice

Corporate Centre

- Over the 1992 Christmas period, employees participated in the Westminster Community Challenge. 35 employees undertook 12 short projects such as organising a tea party for lonely pensioners and visiting homebound stroke sufferers. A volunteer working group has been formed with representatives from each department, who are actively building on the awareness and enthusiasm generated through the challenge.

GrandMet Information Services

- Over Christmas 1992, staff worked with Single Homeless in Hillingdon to organise Hospitality at Christmas. Staff collected food and clothing, donated a washing machine and tumble drier, hired equipment and decorated the centre. They involved other GrandMet companies who donated non alcoholic drinks, decorations and loaned furniture. Financial support was given by the GrandMet Charitable Trust.
- GMIS has also twinned with Swakeleys Girls School in Hillingdon to promote and support equality of access in IT. GMIS staff have volunteered their time and expertise to help refurbish a new Technology suite and establish a network of computers

International Distillers & Vintners

- In Harlow, a volunteer committee has been formed and presentations have been made by local groups to help recruit volunteers
- In London, 6 employees have participated in a pilot tutoring scheme with Cities In Schools. Volunteers work in pairs to lead a series of workshops to enable pupils to prepare for work and further education by giving help with preparing CVs, telephone and interview techniques.

Halifax Building Society

The Halifax Building Society employs around 22,500 employees and the company has had an active community affairs programme since 1989 which includes a scheme which matches fundraising by staff. In 1991 an analysis identified three areas for improvement to the programme: to develop stronger links with local communities; to raise the profile both internally and externally of the programme and to increase the active involvement of staff in community projects. Alongside this analysis, Halifax had also identified a development need amongst their young staff and launched **Community Development Circles** to meet these diverse needs.

The initiative was launched through a personal message from the Chief Executive to all staff and staff were encouraged to volunteer. Teams of up to ten staff were selected on individual development needs and were based at locations throughout the country (350 staff from 45 locations). Their task was to organise an event (or events) to raise money for local charities. As an alternative the group could undertake a specific project rather than raise money.

The projects lasted for six months and although teams were given broad guidelines and a minimal budget, they were largely left to their own resources and the majority of involvement was in their own time. At the end of the six months, each team was required to make a presentation at a regional 'final'. Regional winners went forward to a national final. Most of the projects were innovative fundraising initiatives for local charities and a total of £130,000 was raised throughout the UK. Over 65 charities were assisted by Halifax staff and the company's objectives were met by the programme, not only in raising the profile of the programme from widespread media coverage but also in the positive impact on the individuals who took part.

Two examples of activity are a team from Watford who planned and built a landscaped garden in the grounds of Summer Place Home for the Elderly and Disabled, which is run by Watford Borough Council and holds a luncheon club for the elderly and infirm to visit. £1,750 was donated to Watford Borough Council to purchase items for 11 other council run homes and the garden was built with £1,000 worth of plants, £500 worth of garden furniture and valuable gardening labour.

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Leeds Safe House is a refuge for young people. The refuge is a safe place where young people under 17 can stay for a while where they are in crisis. Project staff offer support, advice and counselling and can mediate and act as an advocate for the young person. Halifax Building Society volunteers undertook to revitalise the garden and be sponsored for the work at the same time to raise funds for the Safe House. £900 was raised.

Chief Executive, J D Birrell says: "Community Development Circles are now a permanent part of our activities. They have proven to be a powerful vehicle for developing staff competence and for supporting an important corporate objective. This year's exercise has been launched with total support from senior management and over 400 staff are now involved in planning and setting up projects."

IBM UK

IBM has a longstanding tradition of involving its employees in community activities. A 10% scheme allows employees to take up to that amount of their working week to volunteer, subject to management discretion. This facility has been instrumental in creating a climate within IBM where volunteering is seen as a very natural part of being employed by the company. Their community activity is focused on a small number of selected priority areas that are considered to be relevant to its business and where the company can add most value. These are

- education and training
- the environment
- voluntary sector empowerment
- information technology for people with disabilities

In supporting projects in these areas, IBM often uses a combination of employee expertise and know-how, through volunteering and secondment, quite apart from cash donations. In addition, the company will often look more favourably on supporting projects in the community where employees are involved.

Examples of programmes include:

Support for school governors

The programme was set up to provide support to IBM's existing 250 school governors and to recruit new ones. The governors were surveyed to find out ways in which the company could best support them. As a result, 8 IBM locations put on company-sponsored training events; a newsletter was launched; an electronic mail forum was set up to allow governors to share information; a two and a half day management course was run for IBM chairs of governing bodies paired with Headteachers of their schools

Debt alert and Citizens Advice Bureaux

Employee volunteers helped Citizens Advice Bureaux in the more deprived areas of Scotland to install information technology in their offices and ran training workshops for them. An employee volunteer wrote a piece of software called Debt Alert to help money advice workers within the Bureaux manage the increasing numbers of debt cases they have been receiving

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- a debt case can now be handled in 15 minutes instead of an hour. IBM retirees are involved in helping to extend Debt Alert to England and Northern Ireland in a partnership between NACB, Allied Dunbar and IBM.

Retirees VIP Programme

IBM retirees in Hampshire are being matched with volunteering opportunities as part of a year-long pilot to involve retirees in the local community. A survey of retirees nationwide revealed a high level of interest in volunteering, especially where coordinated by the company. IBM is backing a retiree coordinator to run the Retiree Volunteering in Partnership programme. Working with partner organisations to undertake the matching process and also producing a quarterly newsletter.

The MAD Team Challenge - Making A Difference in the Community

This scheme encourages IBM volunteers to form teams to support projects in the community. The projects have to involve one or more partner organisations. Employees can then bid to IBM for money to support their projects.

IBM Consultants Volunteering

Consultants are being encouraged to offer their skills and expertise for short-term projects of up to five days to community organisations. This is a 6 month pilot and builds on experience of helping community organisations use their IT more effectively.

Recognition and Guidance

By running two award schemes under the banner of IBM in the Community Awards, the company recognises both individual volunteering and volunteering carried out as part of an IBM location activity on a local level. Cash prizes are awarded to spend with the relevant voluntary organisations. A 'how-to' manual called 'It's Your Community, It's Your Business' provides advice and guidance to Location Managers about setting up local employee volunteering schemes and an employee volunteering database exists as a 'lookup' item on the electronic mail bulletin board for access by all employees to provide a record of past and current projects where employees have provided support to the community.

National Westminster Bank and Winton School

National Westminster Bank, as part of their overall Employee Involvement Programme are proud of the work that their staff are involved with in association with CSV Education and Winton Primary School, a multi-cultural inner city school in the London Kings Cross area. The aim of the project is to bring together the resources of the school with those of the local community and involves employee volunteers, retired people and student volunteers in the life of the school.

The project is funded by the Reeves Foundation in partnership with CSV and a dedicated co-ordinator. Volunteers get involved in a variety of activities from Adopt-a-Reader, Befriend a Child, Singing in the Nursery, Jamaican Cookery, Creative Written Work and Photography. Employee volunteers are the greatest contributors to the scheme, giving some 406 hours in the first year of the project. Following an approach to Nat West and one other local company, 16 Nat West employees have got involved.

Most of the employee volunteers are actively taking part in the Adopt-a-Reader scheme designed to promote individual reading help. Volunteers come into the school for a minimum of one hour each week to listen and encourage the children to read. Others come into the school to befriend and support children with special needs and a group of volunteers help with computer technology, maths or the environmental lunchtime Watch Club.

Some have started their involvement in the reading scheme and have since got involved in other projects. For example, one volunteer started at Winton as a reading volunteer and later volunteered to help coach children with a tap dancing routine for the Christmas pantomime!

Not only do the children benefit from this involvement - one class teacher reported to the Headteacher that the volunteer had achieved a year's progress in a term, but the volunteers gain tremendous satisfaction, motivated by the request for help as they empathise with the heavy load put upon teachers and are sensitive to their needs.

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Royal Mail

Royal Mail's commitment to employee volunteering sprang from their Managing Director's involvement with the national Employees in the Community campaign which in turn led to local participation in employee volunteering pilot projects in Leeds and Leicester in 1991. This participation was reinforced nationally, when following a major reorganisation in April 1992, each of nine new divisions covering the UK appointed a Community Action Manager. These nine individuals formed a professional network together with a centrally positioned Head of Community Action.

With more than 167,000 employees, Royal Mail is committed to implementing a 'bottom-up' model of Community Action, for example, by consistently placing emphasis on the active extramural efforts of Royal Mail employees and the experience of the Leicester pilot elicited useful pointers on how to achieve a focus for such activities, such as creating a Royal Mail Wood within the new national forest planned for Leicestershire and providing routine maintenance for a local charity dedicated to providing better facilities and resources for children with cancer.

In Summer 1992, Royal Mail took advantage of the Employees in the Community National Challenge to present to employees a framework for local hands-on support to the community. Over 100 local 24-hour projects were undertaken. Projects ranged from building a playground for children with cerebral palsy in Cardiff to decorating a centre for the homeless in London, and from restoring a piggery in Northampton to rebuilding a riding stables for the disabled in Fife.

National events are always used as a facilitator of local action. Some eight months after The National Challenge, Royal Mail employees were responsible for three-quarters of the record-breaking number of entries for The Post Office's own Community Awards Scheme in early 1993. Again, the activities covered a broad spectrum of community involvement, ranging from refurbishment of hostels to environmental improvements, and from working with sick or mentally handicapped children to many enterprising fund-raising ventures.

All activity is supported by a communications strategy which seeks to convey to all employees that Royal Mail seeks to support their efforts. Considerable care has been taken over building in such features as employees requirements for public relations exposure, increasing awareness of opportunities for local community action, and spreading knowledge of the support available from

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the business. Special attention continues to be given to communicating this strategy to managers within Royal Mail.

Most crucially, all nine regional divisions have been concentrating on supplying sufficient information for groups of employees to set up their own local Community Action Teams so that they can take ownership of all activities.

Sedgwick

Sedgwick is an international insurance broker with nearly 5,000 employees in the UK and 780 in their Norwich office.

The company considers an important element of its community programme to be the contribution of staff skills. Since 1991 a team of volunteers has been visiting Norwich prison and have developed a drop-in Job Club for those inmates of the prison who are nearing release. The club aims to help inmates with job search skills and interview techniques.

The project arose from discussions with the prison governor who identified that involvement from the business sector would be beneficial to inmates and the scheme was set up with education staff from the prison and volunteers.

Here, the prisoners can gain valuable guidance on writing CVs and completing applications forms as well as having the opportunity to try out speculative telephone calls and interview techniques. In this way, the individual inmates are able to assess their own abilities, develop job search skills and begin to plan for their release. All material, including visuals and handouts and the training of the members of the education staff and officers to run the Club themselves has been produced by Sedgwick volunteers, who in the event of unavailability of staff, run the evening job club as well as seeing inmates individually.

The project began in early 1991 and has been extended to include contributing to a pre-release course at HMP Wayland where volunteers again give mock interviews to inmates. At the request of the probation service, young offenders nearing release from a local institution are also helped in this way by seeing Sedgwick volunteers at the local probation centre. Following the success of the programme in Norwich, Sedgwick is considering offering a similar service to prisons in other cities with a Sedgwick office.

The original team of six volunteers has now increased to 11 as the programme has been extended. The volunteers have benefited from team work and presentation skills as well as learning counselling skills, knowing how to offer constructive criticism, showing understanding, empathy and patience and how to give encouragement.

Sun Microsystems

Sun Microsystems is a sales, support and marketing company in the computing sector and employs 470 employees in the UK both in Surrey and in Scotland. Their Community Action Volunteer (CAV) programme is designed to help employees make a difference in their communities through volunteer activities.

The company has a contractual partnership with their two local Councils for Voluntary Service in Surrey Heath and in Scotland and liaise with a nominated staff member at each site. In this way, a dedicated resource can work with the staff, in this case one day each week, in a way that might not be possible with a workforce of this size.

In Camberley electronic mail is used to encourage staff to participate and to suggest projects. Staff are involved in all stages of projects. 50 volunteers are available to undertake group projects and this 'workforce' is unique in the Camberley area. Staff have derived great pleasure from their involvement in these projects where they can use their professional, personal and physical skills. Both group and individual projects are undertaken and an important element of their programme is that projects include family and friends and other volunteers from outside the company. Examples include clearing a heathland, collecting goods and distributing Christmas parcels to elderly people and desktop publishing a leaflet and installing a modem link at a family centre.

In Scotland Sun has been involved in numerous volunteer projects and its special relationship with West Lothian Council of Social Service (WLCS) has greatly enhanced Sun's ability to respond to community needs.

The Linlithgow site launched a Give As You Earn scheme as part of a Community Awareness month. 20% of the staff signed up for the scheme and each donation was matched £ for £ by the Sun Foundation in the States. In addition, they held a Charities Day when 20 local charities were invited on to the site to raise money.

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Yorkshire Electricity

Yorkshire Electricity is one of 12 regional electricity companies employing some 6,975 people. Employee volunteering is an integral part of their business culture and is key to the company's aims to contribute to the health of the local community and encourage self development amongst their staff.

Support is given in many ways throughout the company. Fundraising is eligible for matching on a £ for £ basis and payroll giving is promoted with almost 11% of staff participating. Staff have an extensive and innovative involvement with local schools and colleges through individual members of staff working with local schools, work experience placements and company encouragement of staff to become governors.

The range of employee volunteering activities is extensive and as a result of the company Building on Ability programme which gives people with disabilities an opportunity to get involved in sporting and cultural activities, a number of staff have developed community links. Projects include a business audit for DIAL, the Disability Information Advice Line and escorting people with disabilities to the theatre. The company has also made some longer term secondments to local organisations. Staff fundraising has been very popular with employees raising money for a variety of local causes such as the purchase of an electric wheelchair for a child with Cerebral Palsy and in 1991/2 the company supported a fundraising drive and matched contributions to Children in Need and Telethon.

In 1991, to encourage further involvement of employees in the community, YE joined a Business in the Community pilot project in Leeds. The Chairman of the company was a founder member of the steering committee and YE is the main supporter of a Community Group Forum in which 30 groups participate and identify potential volunteering projects. Current and retired staff in Leeds have formed a committee called VOLTS (VOLunTeerS) to encourage activity and support campaigns. Opportunities are published through special noticeboards, newsletters and personal contact. In 9 months, contact has been established with over 30 groups and 60 staff have taken part in new opportunities. A Fun Day, which involved over 30 community groups raised awareness and attracted 1000 people as well as almost £4,000.

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Following the success of the Leeds work, staff at other sites have now decided to extend the arrangement throughout the company.

In addition, several YE employees are given an extra week's leave paid and one week unpaid for their participation in the Territorial Army and other Reserve Volunteer Forces and a number of YE staff were involved in organising and running the disability programme run as part of the World Student Games. The involvement took place in both company and own time and events included a festival of skiing, water sports day and wheelchair basketball tournament. "I have been delighted with the success of YE's Employee Volunteering Programme despite the pressure on resources and I look forward to seeing our programme go from strength to strength in the future" says Stephen Guy, Group Personnel Director.